



CITY OF BURLINGTON
Minutes of the Special Common Council
Jeannie Hefty, Mayor
Diahnn C. Halbach, City Clerk
Wednesday, October 14, 2020

1. Call to Order – Roll Call

Mayor Hefty called the Common Council meeting to order via Zoom at 6:00 p.m. Roll Call - Present: Mayor Hefty, Alderman Susan Kott, Alderman Theresa Meyer, Alderman Bob Grandi, Alderman Ryan Heft, Alderman Steve Rauch, Alderman Jon Schultz, Alderman Todd Bauman. Excused: Alderman Tom Preusker.

Staff present: City Administrator Carina Walters, City Attorney John Bjelajac, Assistant City Administrator/Zoning Administrator Megan Watkins, Police Chief Mark Anderson, Fire Chief Alan Babe, DPW Director Peter Riggs, and Human Resource Manager Jason Corbin.

2. Consideration of Special Event - Spooky City

Walters gave an overview of the event, stating it was tabled at the October 6, 2020 Common Council meeting. She stated the event, held annually, was first proposed to be a vehicular event this year; however, staff felt it was unsafe and did not recommend. The event coordinator then proposed the traditional method of holding the event, which staff does not recommend due to the pandemic and anticipated attendance without a strategic plan to provide CDC safety measures.

Shad Branen, event coordinator, stated it is unknown what the attendance will be due to the pandemic. He has been looking into safety measures such as a one-way route, a mask requirement inside and outside, business representatives will stand outside to hand out candy, and extending the event time to help provide for social distancing. He further stated the downtown businesses are in support of the event, but more in support of a vehicular event. Walters stated the police department has concerns with the vehicular event including staging in the residential areas, unrestrained children in a vehicle, distracted drivers, pedestrian traffic concerns and bottlenecks of vehicles. Meyer and Kott voiced concerns over pedestrian traffic around vehicles and bottlenecks.

Mayor Hefty questioned if the event would include coffin races. Branen stated no, the event would only include downtown trick-or-treating, a few sidewalk artists and movies throughout the day. All other traditional activities have been cancelled.

Schultz questioned how the vehicular event would be different than a parade. Anderson stated in speaking with the City's insurance company, parades are more planned out with safety measures in place, whereas this is a first-time event proposal with not all details planned out.

Alderman Preusker arrived at 6:21 pm

Kott questioned if Pine Street would be closed off. Branen stated Pine Street, E. Chestnut Street and Washington Street would be blocked off, providing more social distancing opportunities.

Mayor Hefty stated the Council has a tough decision to make as other events have been previously approved this year. Meyer stated this decision sets the tone for everything and the Council must be leaders, as tough decisions help to keep the number of cases down during the pandemic.

Preusker mentioned that people have learned to socially distance during this pandemic, especially at big box stores that have a large capacity. Bauman expressed his concern that some people might have great concerns if the crowds are too large.

Motion: Alderman Heft. Second: Alderman Grandi. Roll Call Vote: Aye – 3 (Schultz, Preusker, Bauman); Nay – 5 (Kott, Meyer, Grandi, Heft, Rauch). The motion was denied.

3. Consideration of Special Event - Halloween Trick-or-Treat

Walters stated trick-or-treating has been previously advertised in various City communications which CDC recommendations.

Meyer questioned if staff recommends this event. Anderson stated the CDC and Governor orders recommend against trick-or-treating, but to consider other safe activities. For those reasons the Police Department and Fire Department do not recommend this event.

Heft and Kott stated staff should enhance communications regarding recommended pandemic safety measures on all City communications with this event. Kott further stated people can choose not to participate if they feel uncomfortable with the event.

Motion to cancel Trick-or-Treat: Alderman Meyer. Second: Alderman Grandi. Roll Call Vote: Aye – 1 (Meyer); Nay – 7 (Kott, Grandi, Heft, Rauch, Schultz, Preusker, Bauman). The motion carried to allow trick-or-treating.

4. Consideration of Special Event - Burlington Ice Festival

Walters explained changes made to the event plan due to the pandemic including a one-way route in the park, sanitizing stations and signage to encourage social distancing and wearing of masks. Mayor Hefty stated activities with the event will be more spaced out in the park than in prior years.

Heft stated he is concerned with the congregating of people and questioned if the ice sculptures could be spread out throughout the downtown instead of only at the park. Kott

stated she would like to see it stay in the park, as the artists enjoy being together, but would like to see the sculptures spread out more throughout the park.

Grandi stated he would like to see the event only have ice carving and eliminate the other planned activities.

Heft and Meyer stated they would like to see a way to get the event streamed live for those that are uncomfortable with attending.

Preusker stated he would like to see the event happen or people will just go to other events held within the state.

Motion to limit Burlington Ice Festival to ice carving competition only: Alderman Meyer. Second: Alderman Heft. Roll Call Vote: Aye – 8; Nay – 0. The motion carried.

5. Adjourn

A motion was made by Bauman with a second by Preusker to adjourn the meeting. With all in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:

Megan E. Watkins
Assistant City Administrator/Zoning Administrator
City of Burlington